

Congressman Michaud Works With House Veterans Affairs Committee to Approve Key Veterans Legislation

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Washington,

D.C. - Yesterday, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved six veterans' bills that would address a variety of issues including enforcing and enhancing veterans' small business opportunities, making permanent the VA home loan program for members of the Selected Reserves, enhancing information sharing between the Department of Defense and the VA, and providing for a cost-of-living adjustment for rates of disability compensation for veterans and their dependents.

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"I'm

pleased that our committee could work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass these important pieces of legislation," said Congressman Michael Michaud, Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits. "I fully support these measures and look forward to working with my colleagues to help pass these bills."

Congressman

Michaud last week heard testimony regarding H.R. 1460, the Veterans' Entrepreneurship and Benefits Improvement Act. This bill focuses on increasing economic development and small business opportunities for veterans and service-disabled veterans. As approved, H.R. 1460 represents efforts by Congressman Michaud and the Veterans' Affairs Committee to enforce and enhance veterans' small business opportunities through high quality job training and education programs and assistance to service-disabled veterans reentering the workforce.

"As

our young men and women return from war overseas, they should know, and all of our veterans should know, that we are doing everything we can to keep our nation's promises to them, and to give them the opportunities and assistance that they deserve," said Congressman Michaud. "That is the best way to support our troops."

The six bills approved by the Veterans' Affairs Committee are:

H.R. 1460, the Veterans' Entrepreneurship and Benefits Improvement Act, would enforce and enhance veterans' small business opportunities. The legislation would also extend VA's specially adapted housing grant to severely disabled service members prior to separation from active duty service, reinstate the Department of Veterans' Affairs vendee loan program, and repeal current law restricting a surviving spouse or dependent children to receiving no more than two years of accrued benefits if the veteran dies while a claim for VA periodic monetary benefits is being processed.

H.R. 1715 would enhance the VA's ability to collect reimbursements for services provided by the VA to veterans who are eligible for Medicare or other federal health insurance programs.

H.R. 1911 would strengthen the cooperation and collaboration between VA and the Department of Defense by reorganizing and expanding the mandate of the Joint Executive Committee.

H.R. 1257, the Selected Reserve Home Loan Equity Act, would make the VA home loan program for members of the Selected Reserve permanent, and reduce the funding fee charged to Select Reserve home loan applications to the same amount as the amount paid by active duty service members.

H.R. 1683, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, provides a cost-of-living increase to the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and to the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans. The percentage amount would be equal to the increase for benefits provided under the Social Security Act, which is calculated based upon changes in the Consumer Price Index.

H.R. 1562, the Veterans' Health Care Cost Recovery Act, would strengthen the VA's rights under law to collect third-party reimbursements from certain third parties for the costs VA incurs in providing health care to veterans and others covered by a private or public health plan.

The House of Representatives
is expected to vote on H.R. 1257, H.R.1562 and H.R.1683 early next week.

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